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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL PURSUANT TO RESOLUTION 908 (1994)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In paragraph 3 of its resolution 908 (1994), the Security Council decided to extend the mandate of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) for an additional period terminating on 30 September 1994. The present report is intended to assist the Council in its deliberations on the renewal of the mandate of UNPROFOR and is complementary to the comprehensive analysis of the mandate of UNPROFOR already submitted in my report of 16 March 1994 (S/1994/300). It provides an account of recent developments in the area that have affected the environment in which UNPROFOR has to operate.

II. STRUCTURE OF UNPROFOR

2. UNPROFOR is headed by my Special Representative, Mr. Yasushi Akashi, and includes military, civil affairs (including civilian police), public information and administrative components. Its headquarters is in Zagreb, Croatia. As of 15 September 1994, the strength of the military component, commanded by the Force Commander, Lieutenant General Bertrand de Lapresle of France, amounted to 38,582, including 624 United Nations military observers from 32 countries. There are 641 civilian police, 1,870 international civilian staff (including 1,353 contractual personnel who are not members of the international civil service) and 2,188 local staff. UNPROFOR is thus the largest peace-keeping operation in the history of the United Nations. It is divided into three operational commands: UNPROFOR (Croatia) led by Major General Ghazi Tayyeb of Jordan, UNPROFOR (Bosnia and Herzegovina) led by Lieutenant General Sir Michael Rose of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and UNPROFOR (former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) led by Brigadier General Tryggve Tellefsen of Norway.

III. CROATIA

3. In the period under review, UNPROFOR's activities in Croatia have been focused on the monitoring of the general cease-fire agreement signed in Zagreb on 29 March 1994 by the Government of Croatia and the local Serb authorities in the United Nations Protected Areas (UNPAs) (see S/1994/367, annex). The agreement constitutes a major achievement that has significantly reduced active

hostilities between the conflicting sides in Croatia. While the Croatians quickly implemented the agreement, the Serbs took a longer time to implement key provisions of it. By the end of May, however, UNPROFOR reported almost total compliance, characterized, inter alia, by a general cessation of hostilities, withdrawal of forces beyond fixed lines of separation and the placement of heavy weapons in agreed storage sites. UNPROFOR has assumed exclusive control over the zone of separation, which covers an area of over 1,300 square kilometres. Since 29 March, the United Nations Civilian Police (UNCIVPOL) has conducted over 6,000 patrols in the zone of separation.

4. The implementation of the cease-fire agreement raised expectations that the parties would enter into comprehensive discussions on issues of mutual economic benefit, followed by talks on a final political settlement, under the auspices of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia. The opening of economic negotiations was scheduled to take place in mid-April. However, during the months of April and May, the local Serb authorities in Knin issued a number of statements that appeared to close the door on political reconciliation. They announced their intention to pursue full integration with other Serb areas, thus setting back hopes for an early settlement with Croatia, and stipulated unrealistic preconditions for talks. It proved impossible to open negotiations at that stage. Renewed efforts were made in June. However, disagreement over modalities for the negotiations led to the cancellation of talks scheduled for 16 and 17 June.

5. While the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia has continued to lead efforts to start the economic negotiations and define an acceptable agenda, UNPROFOR has focused primarily on strengthening compliance with the cease-fire agreement, in order to maintain a climate conducive to peace. These efforts have faced several setbacks involving a number of incidents in the UNPAs. In Sector West, despite assurances to the contrary, Croatia has, since mid-May, maintained between 300 to 500 "special police" in positions close to the former contact line. Incursions by local Serb forces across the contact line have also led to the death of two Croatian soldiers and one civilian. In Sector South, the Croatian side appeared to expect that water facilities on the Serb side would come under UNPROFOR control and management, without the need for Serb agreement; UNPROFOR, however, can function effectively only with the consent and cooperation of the parties. There has also been a series of violent incidents, including the destruction by explosives of an UNCIVPOL station and an incursion into the zone of separation by 100 Serb soldiers, of whom a small number remain.

6. In an already charged atmosphere, the Association of Displaced Persons of Croatia in early July imposed a blockade on all the crossing-points into or within the UNPAs, in order to draw attention to their plight and apply pressure on UNPROFOR to expedite their return to their homes in the Protected Areas. The Croatian Government maintained that it was not in a position to take decisive action to lift the blockades. As outlined in my letter to the President of the Council of 26 July 1994 (S/1994/888), the resultant restrictions on UNPROFOR's ability to carry out its mandate, particularly on the Croatian side of the zone of separation, were a serious violation of the terms of the cease-fire agreement and gravely disrupted UNPROFOR's ability to discharge its duties, in particular

its monitoring responsibilities. There were also major disruptions to UNPROFOR's logistics operations and scheduled troop rotations.

7. Senior military and civil affairs officials from UNPROFOR embarked on a series of high-level discussions with the Croatian authorities to secure the latter's full adherence to the cease-fire agreement. Following the Security Council's presidential statement (S/PRST/1994/44) of 11 August, the blockade was eventually lifted on 19 August. However, Croatian police moved the location of the Lipik crossing-point in Sector West closer towards Serb positions, in disregard of the cease-fire agreement, which freezes all tactical positions within 10 kilometres of the contact line. In these circumstances, UNPROFOR is not prepared to use the crossing-point and continues to insist on its return to its original position.

8. Although 17 of the 19 crossing-points are now in use, tensions persist on this issue. During the blockades, a number of public statements made by Croatian leaders referred to the possibility of having to resort to military action to reintegrate the UNPAs if progress could not be achieved peacefully. This fostered Serb fears of a Croatian attack, and resulted in a withdrawal of numerous Serb heavy weapons from storage sites.

9. Despite these setbacks and violations, both sides continue to express support for the cease-fire agreement, and UNPROFOR has intensified its efforts to restore full compliance with its provisions. Following mediation by the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, senior officials from the Croatian Government and local Serb authorities were brought together for discussions in Knin on 5 August. Committing themselves to continuing the negotiating process, they agreed to establish eight expert groups to prepare for future negotiation on specific economic areas. During subsequent contacts between the International Conference and officials from the Croatian Government and the local Serb authorities, as well as between my Special Representative and the latter, agreement was reached to begin negotiations on the opening of the Zagreb-Belgrade highway. A compromise proposal was presented by the International Conference, which has proved to be unacceptable to the Croatian Government. It has therefore not yet been possible to open direct negotiations on this issue.

10. The Prevlaka Peninsula, which was demilitarized under UNPROFOR supervision following the adoption of Security Council resolution 779 (1992) of 6 October 1992, with the creation of a "blue zone" that only UNPROFOR personnel may enter, is of considerable strategic importance to both the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and Croatia. If UNPROFOR was to withdraw before a final political settlement is reached, there is a risk that hostilities would resume in the area. As UNPROFOR's presence continues to be required, I have requested my Special Representative, in co-operation with the Co-Chairmen of the Steering Committee of the International Conference, to lend his good offices to resolve the remaining difficulties in coordination, as appropriate, with the local authorities.

11. By its resolution 908 (1994), the Council authorized the extension of close air support to the territory of Croatia. Discussions between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and UNPROFOR are continuing on technical aspects of

this issue. In the meantime, the North Atlantic Council has, in principle, authorized close air support in the event of attacks from Croatian territory against the "safe area" of Bihac.

IV. BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

12. While significant progress has been made in stabilizing the military situation in many parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, events in recent months have demonstrated the fragility of the peace on the ground. Military restraint by the warring parties in some areas was undermined by aggressive acts in others, resulting in a marked variation in progress towards normalization of life in different parts of the country. The continuation of warfare in parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, however, should not be allowed to obscure the largely successful peace-keeping work carried out by the Force. UNPROFOR has been a significant factor in facilitating the improvement of the population's living conditions through, for example, its promotion of local cease-fires, its negotiation and implementation of agreements on a variety of issues ranging from the release of prisoners to the repair and improvement of public services and its assistance in the evacuation of the wounded and sick.

13. Following the signature on 23 February 1994 of a cease-fire agreement between the Bosnian government army and the Bosnian Croat forces (see S/1994/216), as well as the agreement subsequently reached in Washington on 10 May 1994 on the creation of the Bosniac-Croat Federation, UNPROFOR has been closely involved in the implementation of all its military aspects, bringing a large degree of stability and peace to central Bosnia and western Herzegovina. UNPROFOR was instrumental in achieving a breakthrough in an agreement on freedom of movement in the Mostar area, which was implemented on 23 May, and resulted in a rapid improvement in the quality of life for residents on the eastern bank of the Neretva River. UNPROFOR has also played a pivotal role in monitoring the demilitarization of Mostar, a precondition for the establishment of the European Union administration in that city on 23 July 1994. In central Bosnia, UNPROFOR has also been involved, from an early stage, in negotiations on freedom of movement both for the population and for commercial traffic. While freedom of movement is not complete, some commercial convoys, under the security provided by UNPROFOR's presence, have been able to move from the coast to southern, central and northern Bosnia. Some infrastructural problems have been overcome, although economic rehabilitation has barely begun.

14. Shortly after the last renewal of its mandate, UNPROFOR was confronted with a rapidly deteriorating situation in Gorazde (see S/1994/600), which resulted in the first use of close air support against Serb ground targets on 10 and 11 April 1994. The crisis in Gorazde led me to request additional support from NATO, which in turn declared an exclusion zone around Gorazde on 22 April 1994. On the same date, an agreement was reached in Belgrade between Bosnian-Serb leaders and my Special Representative, facilitated by President Milosevic of Serbia, that brought the Bosnian-Serb offensive to an end, provided for the immediate deployment of UNPROFOR military and civilian personnel, established a cease-fire, which has been largely respected, and required the Bosnian-Serb forces to withdraw from a 3-kilometre area from the centre of Gorazde town as

well as to redeploy all their heavy weapons outside a 20-kilometre circle from the same point.

15. In late April 1994 tensions mounted in and around the strategically important Posavina corridor, with frequent artillery, mortar and rocket exchanges affecting the Brcko, Tuzla and Orasje areas. In response, UNPROFOR mediated between the parties and eventually agreed with the Bosnian Serbs, on 5 May 1994, that a team of 16 United Nations military observers would be deployed in and around Brcko. That deployment was immediately carried out and UNPROFOR's presence in the area has significantly contributed to reducing tension and making an offensive by either side less likely.

16. After several weeks of intensive negotiations, UNPROFOR mediated the signing on 17 March 1994 of an agreement between the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Bosnian-Serb party on freedom of movement in the Sarajevo area. As a result, two routes across Sarajevo airport, one route from Sarajevo to Visoko and the bridge at Grbavica were reopened on 23 March 1994 for civilian traffic and humanitarian goods. From that date until 26 July 1994, when the Bosnian Serbs suspended the agreement on the airport routes, some 60,000 persons and over 12,000 vehicles used the Sarajevo-Butmir route, while nearly 100,000 civilians and 19,500 vehicles used the route linking two Serb suburbs. The other two routes remain open, with the Grbavica bridge used over the same period by over 6,500 persons and the Sarajevo-Visoko route by 11,500. UNPROFOR has been actively negotiating the reopening of the routes across the airport that had brought freedom of movement and a major improvement of living conditions, including the near-disappearance of black-marketeering, to all citizens of Sarajevo.

17. While UNPROFOR convoys into Sarajevo have not been seriously affected, UNPROFOR and humanitarian flights into the city have been targeted with increasing frequency, for the most part by the Bosnian-Serb side, resulting in one death and several severe injuries to UNPROFOR personnel. Despite some setbacks in recent weeks, UNPROFOR successfully negotiated an anti-sniping agreement in Sarajevo on 14 August 1994. The agreement by and large continues to hold and was instrumental in permitting a resumption of the city's tramway service, which had been suspended because of sniping. A similar anti-sniping agreement was concluded in Gorazde on 28 August 1994, which also appears to be holding well.

18. The Special Coordinator for Sarajevo, appointed pursuant to resolution 900 (1994) of 4 March 1994, began operations in Sarajevo on 16 April. He has established a coordination committee, which has become the focal point for restoration activities by donor Governments, as well as international and non-governmental organizations. Although the situation in Sarajevo has not allowed rapid implementation of the projects identified in the plan of action, cooperation with the local authorities has been proceeding well, including with the Serb side, which has shown a willingness to cooperate on technical matters. The first meeting of the Committee of Donors is scheduled to be held on 20 September in Vienna. It is hoped that the concerted efforts of the United Nations and the international community, coupled with the undertakings of the Bosnian Government and the cooperation of local authorities, will make it

possible for conditions of life in Sarajevo to be substantially improved before the coming winter.

19. Despite the progress made in many areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina, hostilities erupted along many parts of the confrontation line between government and Serb forces after an initial period of calm following the Gorazde crisis. After the adoption of resolution 913 (1994) of 22 April 1994 and the Council's presidential statement of 1 June 1994, UNPROFOR actively pursued the conclusion of a comprehensive cessation of hostilities as the only viable and durable alternative to the partial and local military solutions described above. However, on 8 June 1994 it managed to obtain only the agreement of the government and Bosnian-Serb sides to a one-month cessation of offensive action and provocative activities, as well as to the immediate release, under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), of prisoners-of-war and detainees and the exchange of information on persons whose whereabouts are unknown. While this agreement was still in effect, government forces attempted to capture dominating terrain or to secure routes in the areas of Ozren and Travnik. At the same time, Bosnian-Serb elements continued to expel Muslim civilians from the Banja Luka and Bijeljina areas and imposed new restrictions on the movement of convoys of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The agreement, which was renewed for an additional month in July, lapsed on 8 August 1994.

20. In the last two months of the mandate period, government forces have defeated the forces of the self-declared "Autonomous Province of Western Bosnia" in the Bihac area, resulting in an exodus of an estimated 25,000 refugees to the United Nations Protected Area of Sector North in Croatia. UNPROFOR extended full logistical and medical support to UNHCR and has been actively involved in creating conditions that would make the repatriation of refugees to the Velika Kladusa area possible. Meanwhile, government forces have also resumed operations in the Ozren and Travnik areas and advanced south from the areas of Breza and Dastansko. All these activities have been met by heavy Bosnian-Serb shelling and local counter-attacks at many points along the confrontation line. Although there has been no significant change to the confrontation line throughout this period and no wide-ranging and sustained general offensive by either side, the shifting pattern of localized attacks and counter-attacks has resulted in restrictions by both sides on UNPROFOR's freedom of movement. UNPROFOR made several unavailing attempts to persuade both sides to seek a negotiated rather than a military solution. The continued military activity has also undermined UNPROFOR's efforts to achieve a general cessation of hostilities agreement, as called for in the Council's presidential statement of 30 June.

21. Serious violations of human rights have persisted and UNPROFOR has continued to highlight and condemn strongly the incidence of torture, killings and expulsions of minorities within the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Efforts continue to ensure that the treatment of minorities in Serb-held areas fully complies with international norms and standards. UNPROFOR persists in its attempts to visit and establish a presence in Serb-controlled areas, particularly in Banja Luka and Bijeljina, which are the scenes of continued "ethnic cleansing" by Bosnian-Serb forces. In this connection, I welcome the Council's presidential statement of 2 September condemning the practice of ethnic cleansing wherever it occurs and by whomsoever it is committed.

22. The cease-fire agreement between Bosnian Croats and Bosniacs has greatly improved conditions for the delivery of humanitarian assistance throughout Central Bosnia. However, since the main prewar road communications with Tuzla continue to be interrupted by the line of confrontation, that city can be reached only by secondary roads through mountainous territory. With winter approaching, these roads will again become a challenge to UNHCR's and UNPROFOR's logistical capabilities. UNPROFOR continues to negotiate for the opening of the Tuzla airport to humanitarian flights but, despite repeated attempts to reconcile the positions of the government and Bosnian-Serb sides, this has yet to be achieved.

V. THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

23. The military situation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has remained relatively calm and stable. Few border violations by military or police patrols have been observed along the border with Albania. However, since April there has been a rise in the frequency of encounters between patrols from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia along their common border. The majority of these encounters have been non-confrontational, indicating that neither party seems to wish to provoke conflict. Because of the continued non-recognition of the border by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), however, these incidents may recur with increasing frequency. While both sides have nominated commissions to address the issue, no date has been set for the start of bilateral discussions. Because of the threat to stability arising from unresolved border issues, the establishment of an international border commission is clearly needed.

24. The most serious difficulties experienced by the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in the past six months have been economic. Social stability has been endangered by rising unemployment and a declining economy resulting, inter alia, from the effects of the economic blockade imposed by Greece on 17 February 1994 and of the United Nations sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), formerly the country's primary trading partners. Internal political tensions between Macedonians and ethnic Albanians have also increased. In order to establish accurate estimates of the ethnic composition of the population, the Government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia conducted a nationwide population census from 25 June to 11 July 1994. The census was financed, partly organized and monitored by the Council of Europe and the European Union, with assistance from other bodies including the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and civilian components of UNPROFOR. Official results, as well as an expert assessment of the accuracy of the census, are expected in mid-October 1994, shortly before the holding of presidential and parliamentary elections.

25. Given the complex interrelation of external and internal factors contributing to economic and political uncertainty, and rising social tensions, the Security Council, in resolution 908 (1994) of 31 March 1994, encouraged my Special Representative, in cooperation with the authorities of the former Yugoslavia Republic of Macedonia, to use his good offices as appropriate to

contribute to the maintenance of peace and stability in that Republic. In line with this broadened political mandate, my Special Representative has focused on practical ways of assisting the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia under these difficult conditions. The focus of UNPROFOR's political work, in line with the efforts of the Working Group on Ethnic and National Communities and Minorities of the International Conference of the Former Yugoslavia, has been on strengthening mutual understanding and dialogue among political parties and on monitoring human rights. UNPROFOR's military component has successfully mediated several tense border encounters, achieving the withdrawal of soldiers on both sides, and in early July succeeded in establishing an UNPROFOR observation post at Chupino Brdo on the border with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). In all these activities, UNPROFOR has maintained close coordination with other international bodies, including the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia and CSCE.

VI. MINE-CLEARING ACTIVITIES BY UNPROFOR

26. The Washington Agreement on the Federation in Bosnia and Herzegovina of 1 March 1994 (S/1994/255, annex), and the cease-fire agreement in Croatia of 29 March 1994 (S/1994/367, annex 1), have opened the way for UNPROFOR to become more active in other humanitarian and confidence-building measures in its area of operation. An important obstacle to its work, and to progress towards normalcy in these areas, has been the presence of mines.

27. Under its present mandate, UNPROFOR has no specific role to play in mine clearance for humanitarian purposes. Nor would it be appropriate for UNPROFOR to take upon itself this dangerous task, which should be the responsibility of the parties themselves. However, by its presence on the ground, particularly within the zone of separation in Croatia, which is under its exclusive control, UNPROFOR has been best placed to assist in monitoring the efforts of the parties in mine-clearance activities. This role has helped to develop confidence-building measures between the parties.

28. UNPROFOR's activities in this area cover mine-awareness programmes to assist humanitarian agencies in preparing their programmes with local authorities; gathering of mine information and records from the parties for dissemination to humanitarian agencies and local authorities as appropriate; and coordination and monitoring of mine clearance by the parties and related activities by other international and non-governmental organizations. In carrying out these activities, together with their normal operational duties, UNPROFOR units have sustained mine casualties, many of which could have been avoided had mine-protected vehicles been available.

29. The Security Council may wish to endorse the activities undertaken by UNPROFOR in relation to mine-clearance in both Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and support the acquisition of a small number of protected vehicles for use in areas of mine hazard.

VII. PUBLIC INFORMATION ACTIVITIES

30. In its first two years of operation UNPROFOR, like other United Nations peace-keeping operations, has become conscious of the lack of objective and accurate information in the mission area as well as of the harmful consequences of propaganda and disinformation about its role. With the establishment of a separate Division of Information in February 1994, UNPROFOR has attempted to overcome this deficiency. Public information activities have been focused on informing the population in the mission area about UNPROFOR's mission, mandate and activities, with a view to increasing public understanding and support of its efforts. The Division now consists of four production units - television, radio, publications and print production and promotion - and includes offices in Zagreb, Sarajevo, Skopje, Belgrade and each of the four United Nations Protected Areas in Croatia.

31. In recent months, in accordance with paragraph 55 of General Assembly resolution 48/42, there has been a considerable expansion of the Division's public information programmes in local languages and a number of new initiatives have been launched. Currently, UNPROFOR television programmes in local languages are broadcast on national television stations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. It is hoped that these programmes will also be broadcast on Croatian national television in the near future. Publications, posters, pamphlets and booklets about UNPROFOR and its mission are produced in the local languages and distributed throughout the mission area. In addition, production of taped radio programmes has begun, and UNPROFOR has a daily 20-minute radio programme on a local station in Sarajevo.

32. While these activities are effective in reaching some audiences in the mission area, UNPROFOR currently lacks an independent means of reaching mass audiences on a daily basis without restriction, in order to provide accurate and impartial information and to promote public understanding of the mission, as well as to address issues of current interest. In a peace-keeping operation of the size and complexity of UNPROFOR, radio is clearly the most practical, efficient and cost-effective method of realizing this important objective. Accordingly, UNPROFOR plans to establish an independent UNPROFOR radio station that would give three quarters of the population of the mission area unhindered access to impartial, factual and timely information, thereby increasing public understanding and support for UNPROFOR's peace-making efforts in the former Yugoslavia. Provisions have already been made in the recent UNPROFOR budget proposal and have been approved by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, subject to a specific authorization by the Council. The Security Council is accordingly invited to endorse UNPROFOR's public information policy and programmes, including the establishment of the UNPROFOR radio station.

VIII. FINANCIAL ASPECTS

33. This section will be issued as an addendum to the present report.

IX. OBSERVATIONS

34. The conflicts in the former Yugoslavia are closely interrelated and have a direct impact on UNPROFOR's operations in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. In this context, the work of the Contact Group, which emerged in April of this year and involves five major Powers working with the Co-Chairmen of the Steering Committee of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, could be of great significance for UNPROFOR's future. The Contact Group's proposals for Bosnia and Herzegovina, as is well known, have been accepted by all the parties with the exception of the Bosnian Serbs, who remain adamantly opposed to them. As members of the Security Council are aware, I addressed a letter on 24 July 1994 to the President of the Council, which expressed my views on the possible consequences for UNPROFOR of acceptance by all the parties, or the continued non-acceptance by the Bosnian Serbs, of the Contact Group's peace proposals for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

35. With regard to Croatia, and as outlined in my report to the Security Council on 16 March 1994 (S/1994/300), there are four problem areas in UNPROFOR's mandate which require reassessment: the demilitarization of the UNPAs; the restoration of Croatian authority in the "pink zones"; the establishment of border controls; and assistance for the return of refugees and displaced persons to their homes. All four require either enforcement or the consent of both parties for their implementation. UNPROFOR has neither the means nor the mandate for enforcement action of this nature, and the cooperation of the parties has been elusive.

36. While both sides expressed a willingness in May 1994 to enter into negotiations on the further demilitarization of the areas around the zone of separation, discussions have not yet begun. The deep sense of mistrust that still prevails among the Serbs precludes the possibility of the UNPAs being demilitarized in the near future. Similarly, the return to Croatian authority of the "pink zones", as required by Security Council resolution 762 (1992) of 30 June 1992, has been consistently rejected by the Serbs. It should be noted that, in establishing a zone of separation, the current cease-fire agreement has the de facto effect of suspending action on the status of the "pink zones" until further progress is achieved within the framework of that agreement. My report to the Council of 16 March 1994 (S/1994/300) makes clear in paragraphs 13 and 14 that the Serbs' continuing rejection of Security Council resolution 769 (1992) is very much linked to their disagreement with the provisions entailed in paragraph 12 of Security Council resolution 820 (1993), under which de facto sanctions have been imposed on the UNPAs by subjecting the import, export and transshipment of goods to, from or through the UNPAs to explicit Croatian government approval. With no indication that the Serbs are reconsidering their opposition to this trade and border control, UNPROFOR remains unable to implement Security Council resolution 769 (1992). I should like to make clear to the Council that UNPROFOR will be in no position to implement resolutions 762 (1992) and 769 (1992) until there is a significant change in the attitude of the local Serbs and that it cannot, therefore, accede to the demands of the Government of Croatia that it take on responsibilities which it is clearly unable to fulfil.

37. Despite the inability of UNPROFOR to achieve important parts of its mandate in Croatia, the successful implementation of the cease-fire agreement has opened the possibility for some progress. It has dramatically reduced the number of war casualties and has allowed for increasing normalization of life, including improved economic prospects, particularly for tourism. However, despite this success, UNPROFOR continues to be severely criticized by the Croatian Government and media for its inability to fulfil its entire mandate, and to be threatened with unrealistic deadlines to fulfil tasks which, without the political will of both sides, cannot contribute to long-term stability. While the recriminations directed against UNPROFOR may be partly related to the Croatian political process, they also reflect certain incompatibilities in the Force's mandate, which have made it impossible to achieve the implementation of various tasks within a limited time-frame. The resultant gap between Croatian expectations of what the United Nations presence can deliver, and what UNPROFOR is actually capable of achieving in present circumstances, has become increasingly difficult to bridge.

38. Progress in Croatia has been slow and has proved insufficient to moderate understandable Croatian impatience for a quick solution to the problem of reintegration of the UNPAs into Croatia. Resort to a military option would have incalculable consequences, and would be unlikely to lead to a durable peace. Moreover, all efforts towards a peaceful resolution of the conflict have not yet been exhausted. At this stage, however, the Croatian Government is not willing to negotiate on economic issues without simultaneously negotiating the political settlement. The local Serbs, on the other hand, are not ready to negotiate a political settlement without first having negotiated a number of economic confidence-building measures.

39. Assistance in the creation of conditions that would permit the voluntary return of displaced persons to their homes in or near the UNPAs continues to be of the highest priority for UNPROFOR. In my report of 15 February 1992 (S/23592), I informed the Council that I had asked that UNHCR assume responsibility for designing and implementing a scheme for the return of refugees and displaced persons. This was clearly predicated on a peaceful resolution of the underlying causes of displacement. With UNHCR assistance, several thousands of displaced persons have been able to return to their homes in the Dubrovnik, Sibenik and Zadar hinterlands. Return to more sensitive areas depends not only on the cease-fire but also on a political settlement, which alone would provide the conditions for a large-scale return in safety and dignity. Nevertheless, discussions are taking place among UNHCR, UNPROFOR and both parties on the implementation of a pilot project for voluntary return to a few selected villages in or near the zone of separation.

40. In considering the various options for UNPROFOR's presence in Croatia, I remain alert to the possibility that the situation on the ground could be frozen in a stalemate in which UNPROFOR's continued presence contributed only to the maintenance of an unsatisfactory status quo. I have no wish to recommend the indefinite prolongation of a peace-keeping presence if it is widely judged to be unable to carry out its mandate. I am also conscious that UNPROFOR's presence, and its ability to carry out its mandate, will depend on the will of the Croatian Government to continue to facilitate its work. (In this connection, I must stress once again the importance of the Government finalizing a status-of-

forces agreement with UNPROFOR without further delay.) However, in the present circumstances it is of the greatest importance to secure continued respect for the cease-fire agreement, which has now held for nearly six months. At the same time, further efforts will have to be made in order to create a basis for the reopening of negotiations. These are tasks which require the continued presence of UNPROFOR in Croatia. In any case, in the present fluid and uncertain situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, I am concerned that a recommendation for a precipitate withdrawal from Croatia could jeopardize hopes for progress both there and in the former Yugoslavia as a whole.

41. With regard to Bosnia and Herzegovina, experience gained over the last six months has enhanced mutual understanding, joint planning and cooperation between UNPROFOR and NATO, and the successful deployment of long-awaited additional forces has enabled UNPROFOR to improve its ability to seize opportunities for progress. Nevertheless, the possibility of a further exacerbation and intensification of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina has highlighted UNPROFOR's limitations, and underlined a number of areas of concern. First, the constraints on UNPROFOR's ability to perform its responsibilities in the safe areas, outlined in my report of 8 May 1994 pursuant to resolution 844 (S/1994/555), remain largely unchanged. Secondly, the exclusion zones around Sarajevo and Gorazde, although highly successful in protecting the civilian population from mortar, artillery and tank fire, are expensive in manpower and difficult to enforce and cannot be maintained indefinitely in the absence of a comprehensive cessation of hostilities or, as a minimum, the demilitarization of those areas. This latter solution is now being pursued by UNPROFOR for Sarajevo. It is possible for any side to hide weapons, and UNPROFOR personnel, who are widely dispersed at weapons collection points, are vulnerable to any determined effort to remove weapons or take hostages. Thirdly, the supervision and enforcement of weapons exclusion zones places additional strains on UNPROFOR as an impartial force. All these difficulties are inherent in UNPROFOR's nature as a highly dispersed and lightly armed peace-keeping force that is not mandated, equipped, trained or deployed to be a combatant.

42. In addition to these limitations on its capabilities, UNPROFOR has continued to experience serious restrictions on its freedom of movement imposed by all sides, and especially by the Bosnian Serbs. While conducting operations in the Ozren area, and around Breza and Dastansko, Government forces have denied access to UNPROFOR patrols and, during the same period, the Serbs have significantly and frequently restricted convoy movements and patrolling throughout areas under their control, especially within the exclusion zones. Particularly serious have been actions by both sides that have led to the repeated closure of the Sarajevo airport. In the absence of improved relations between the Government and the Serb party, these difficulties will continue and may intensify. In particular, the pursuit by either side of military objectives, however limited or localized, is incompatible with the nature and purposes of UNPROFOR's deployment.

43. In the circumstances, I am conscious that some Member States may have come to believe that the strategy so far pursued by the international community, involving the deployment of a peace-keeping force dependent upon the active cooperation of the parties, is no longer adequate to serve the objectives proclaimed in the resolutions of the Security Council. However, the use of

"disincentives" such as the general imposition and stricter enforcement of exclusion zones around the safe areas in order to influence the outcome of the conflict, or the lifting of the arms embargo in favour of the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina, would change the nature of the United Nations presence in the area and imply unacceptable risks to UNPROFOR. The former action would place UNPROFOR unambiguously on one side of an ongoing conflict. The latter step would be tantamount to fanning the flames that the United Nations is deployed to extinguish. In both cases the result would be a fundamental shift from the logic of peace-keeping to the logic of war and would require the withdrawal of UNPROFOR from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

44. My position is not only one of peace-keeping principle. The Council is aware that the decisions of Member States to provide troops to UNPROFOR were based on the existing Security Council resolutions and on the assumption that the mandate of the Force would be implemented as a peace-keeping operation. Any attempt to redefine radically the conditions in which UNPROFOR's mandate is implemented and which could have implications for the security of its personnel may, therefore, lead the contributing States to exercise their sovereign right to terminate their contribution to the Force. Although some troop-contributing nations have expressed their willingness to continue their participation even in changed circumstances, I do not believe it to be in the interests of the United Nations for a peace-keeping force to be converted into one which, by mandate and composition, becomes a party to the conflict it was originally deployed to help the parties to bring to an end.

45. I have therefore directed that plans be finalized for a withdrawal at short notice. It is my judgement that, should this withdrawal become necessary, it would take place under extremely difficult conditions and might therefore require an early decision by the Security Council. A 60-day period of preparation would be the minimum necessary in order to arrange for the withdrawing troops to be adequately protected. In a number of foreseeable circumstances, this could be achieved only by the temporary introduction of a significant number of highly combat-capable ground forces provided by Member States outside the United Nations framework.

46. The Council should also be aware that any decision that would necessitate the withdrawal of UNPROFOR will have immediate implications for the Force's ability to implement its existing mandates. In particular, during its preparations for withdrawal, UNPROFOR would no longer be able to protect and support the civilian populations of the three outlying "safe areas", Srebrenica, Zepa and Gorazde. Nor would UNPROFOR any longer be in a position to execute the ground-monitoring functions that are an integral part of the arrangements for the weapons exclusion zones around Sarajevo and Gorazde.

47. Any consideration of decisions leading to the withdrawal of UNPROFOR has, however, to be weighed against the tasks that are currently being implemented successfully by UNPROFOR. In measuring the value of its continuing presence, it is necessary to consider what the costs would be if these tasks were to be abandoned. In the absence of an overall political settlement acceptable to all of the parties, UNPROFOR's current presence and activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina remain invaluable. UNPROFOR continues to play an essential and effective role as an impartial force, and represents, in a society faced with

the challenges of reconciliation and restoration, the principles and objectives of the Charter of the United Nations. Its usefulness in supporting humanitarian activities, facilitating local cease-fires and disengagements and fostering reconciliation and cooperation between communities argues in favour of a further renewal of its mandate.

48. At this stage, therefore, and barring any other developments in the situation on the ground, I do not recommend the withdrawal of the Force. Its current tasks are being effectively pursued. Its role in escorting humanitarian relief convoys has been greatly reduced in the reporting period. Increasingly secure movement has been possible throughout the contiguous territory controlled by the Federation. UNPROFOR will continue to have a vital role in support of UNHCR in the delivery of humanitarian assistance in this territory, including reconnaissance, road repair and maintenance and direct transport. I should like to stress, however, that security problems remain in relation to land access to Sarajevo and the safe areas, and UNPROFOR's assistance is essential for the delivery of humanitarian assistance to these enclaves, although the Force alone cannot ensure access. Even with UNPROFOR support, grave difficulties are foreseen for the humanitarian assistance programme unless progress is made towards a peaceful settlement of the conflict. If land access to the safe areas is denied by the Bosnian and Krajina Serbs, some assistance could continue to be delivered by air drops. However, this will not be adequate for Sarajevo, where the airlift can effectively be halted by a single shell or even a single armed individual.

49. The continued harassment of minorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly by the Bosnian Serbs, has underlined the need for a more comprehensive mandate for UNCIVPOL. Currently, civilian police have a limited mandate to operate in Srebrenica, Tuzla and Mostar, an unofficial agreement to operate in Sarajevo and Gorazde, and no formal mandate to operate in other areas, including Velika Kladusa. It is my view that UNCIVPOL, under the supervision of the Head of Civil Affairs, should be given a mandate to operate throughout the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Security Council may, therefore, wish to consider providing UNPROFOR with a uniform UNCIVPOL mandate for the whole mission area, similar to that already mandated for Croatia in resolution 743 (1992) of 21 February 1992. It is my hope that UNPROFOR could promote, as is already the case in some areas, the protection of human rights in the difficult period ahead, not least in the transitional phase leading to the consolidation of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This would be a crucial role in the context of the return of refugees and displaced persons in safety and dignity.

50. In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, UNPROFOR's presence has demonstrated the value of preventive deployment. But its mission can be judged effective only if it ends successfully. That success will depend on external developments which UNPROFOR does not control. Unresolved disputes between Greece and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia over its name, state symbols, and constitution have blocked the latter's full membership in international organizations, while external threats to its economic stability and border security persist, including through the continuing economic blockade by Greece and the non-recognition by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia's international

borders. In this context, I appeal to the Governments of Greece and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to resume urgently their negotiations under the auspices of my Special Representative, Mr. Cyrus Vance, in order to reach agreement on issues of dispute. I would also take this opportunity to remind the Government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia of the necessity to conclude without further delay a status-of-forces agreement with UNPROFOR.

51. At this time of severe financial constraints for the United Nations, I am fully conscious of the high costs of UNPROFOR, which accounts for a substantial portion of the Organization's peace-keeping expenditures. I continue to examine ways in which to reduce costs, which in turn will require a firm expectation by the international community that the parties to the conflict cooperate with the United Nations, negotiate with each other in good faith, honour and sustain mutual agreements and agree to take up as soon as possible their full responsibilities for fostering mutual recognition and normalization, including preserving the rights and welfare of all citizens.

52. I therefore recommend to the Security Council the renewal of UNPROFOR's mandate for a period of six months, and propose to report further to the Council as necessary on progress towards implementation of the mandate, in the light of developments on the ground and other circumstances affecting the mandate of UNPROFOR.

53. I should like to pay tribute to my Special Representative, Mr. Yasushi Akashi, to the Force Commander, Lieutenant General Bertrand de Lapresle, and to the brave men and women of UNPROFOR for their remarkable courage and dedication in the performance of their duties. I should also like to express my gratitude to the Co-Chairmen of the Steering Committee of the International Conference on the former Yugoslavia, Mr. Thorvald Stoltenberg and Lord Owen, for their unremitting efforts for peace, and to NATO for its close collaboration with, and support of, UNPROFOR.